

Second Annual Hometown Heroes Awards breakfast.

The Chicago Red Cross Hometown Heroes Awards are presented to individuals "whose actions went beyond the call of duty, and whose leadership and commitment made a significant difference to a person, cause or community." This year's special Humanitarian Award is being awarded for the "critical support" provided by Mr. Rauner and the Rauner Family Foundation "for Chicago's education, health and youth development organizations." I applaud the Red Cross for its excellent selection of Bruce Rauner, one of Chicago's finest citizens, and a shining example of leadership and commitment to public service in our city.

Bruce Rauner's philanthropy benefits the entire Chicagoland area. In addition to supporting the Red Cross, Mr. Rauner has dedicated his time and resources to many other local non-profit organizations. Among them include his service on the board of The Chicago Public Education Fund, The Teacher's Academy of Mathematics and Science, The Ravinia Festival, The Golden Apple Foundation, The Academy for Urban School Leadership and the YMCA. The Rauner Family Foundation has also made generous contributions, to the YMCA of Metro Chicago and Pilsen, and the Chicago Public Education Fund.

Earlier this year, the Rauner Family Foundation donated \$3 million for the construction of the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago's new state-of-the-art command center, which is designed to enhance disaster response capabilities for the entire state of Illinois. The new Rauner Center houses local Red Cross offices and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency to coordinate response in the event of a major disaster. The Rauner Foundation's generous contribution will go a long way toward helping establish this center as the model for the country of effective and life-saving disaster response.

Professionally, Mr. Rauner continues to be one of the leaders of Chicago's financial center. He currently serves as the Chairman of GTCR Golder Rauner, LLC, a \$6 billion private equity and venture capitol firm in Chicago. Mr. Rauner joined GTCR in 1981 after working in strategic consulting with Bain and Company and in econometric analysis with Data Resources, Inc.

Before his impressive career was launched, Mr. Rauner graduated with top honors—from Dartmouth College Summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa and from Harvard Business School. He and his wife Diana live in Winnetka and are the parents of Elizabeth, Stephanie, Eric, Margaret, Matthew, and Katherine.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of the Fifth Congressional District of Illinois and indeed all of Chicago, I am privileged to congratulate Bruce V. Rauner and the Rauner Family Foundation for this impressive honor, and I applaud the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago for bestowing this celebrated award on such deserving recipients.

ON THE OCCASION OF MEMORIAL DAY

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 1, 2004

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, this Memorial Day we pay tribute to those who have given their lives in defense of our great Nation. The freedoms we enjoy here at home do not come cheap. They are paid for with the blood and treasure of true American heroes.

Today we reaffirm our commitment to the liberties they fought to defend. And we pledge never to forget their sacrifice.

This year, Memorial Day has a special poignancy. Here in Washington, veterans of the Second World War finally received the monument they so richly deserved. The World War Two Memorial dedicated on the National Mall provides a fitting tribute to a generation of young men and women who defended the United States against the specter of a tyranny as horrible as any the world has known. The 400,000 Americans who gave their lives in the European and Pacific theaters will never be forgotten.

In addition, this Memorial Day is special because it affords us an opportunity to honor the young men and women who are currently engaged in the War on Terror. Halfway around the world, a new generation has been called to battle. And like those that defeated our enemies in the 1940s, this new generation of Americans has faced the enemy with strength and determination. Almost 1,000 men and women have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. Those of us who enjoy the freedom they have sacrificed to defend should be immensely proud and eternally grateful.

This weekend, as we take a moment away from our normal routines, let us say a prayer and remember both those who have gone before us and those who continue to defend freedom from oppression. Our thoughts should be with those families that have lost loved ones in battle. And our thanks should go to all those who honor us by taking up arms to defend the United States.

God bless our men and women in uniform. And God Bless America.

STATEMENT OF ERIC ROSENTHAL, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES (USCID) AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MENTAL DISABILITY RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL, ON "INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY RIGHTS: THE PROPOSED UN CONVENTION"

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 2, 2004

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on March 30th, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus held a groundbreaking Members' Briefing entitled, "International Disability Rights: The Proposed UN Convention." This discussion of the global situation of people with disabilities was intended to help establish disability rights issues

as an integral part of the general human rights discourse. The briefing brought together the human rights community and the disability rights community, and it raised awareness in Congress of the need to protect disability rights under international law to the same extent as other human rights through a binding UN convention on the rights of people with disabilities.

Our expert witnesses included Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Mark P. Lagon; the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ecuador to the United Nations, Ambassador Luis Gallegos; the United Nations Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Johan Schölvinc; the distinguished former Attorney General of the United States, former Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and former Governor of Pennsylvania, the Honorable Dick Thornburgh; the President of the National Organization on Disability (NOD), Alan A. Reich; Kathy Martinez, a member of the National Council on Disabilities (NCD); and a representative of the United States International Council on Disabilities (USCID) and Executive Director of Mental Disability Rights International, Eric Rosenthal.

As I had announced earlier, I intend to place the important statements of our witnesses in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, so that all of my colleagues may profit from their expertise, and I ask that the statement of Eric Rosenthal be placed at this point in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

THE U.S. CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS: MEMBERS' BRIEFING ON THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

It is a great pleasure to be here for this historic occasion. I would like to thank Representative Lantos, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, and the Disability Rights Caucus for making this possible.

I'm a member of the board of the U.S. International Council on Disability (USCID) and executive director of Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI). I have spent more than ten years in the field doing international human rights work for people with disabilities—documenting human rights abuses and training activists. There has been little recognition of the vast worldwide pattern of human rights abuses against people with disabilities that exists in the world today—either by the U.S. government or the United Nations. Thus, it is a great step forward to bring these concerns to public attention today. This hearing provides an invaluable opportunity to discuss what practical next steps the U.S. Government can take to bring long over-due attention to the rights of people with disabilities worldwide.

The most important leadership by a U.S. Agency, to date, has been the work of the U.S. National Council on Disability (NCD). Over the last few years, NCD has made an invaluable contribution to advancing discussion and action on international disability issues by convening International Watch, a group of experts and leaders in the U.S. disability community involved in international activities. In addition, NCD has brought attention to this issue by commissioning two important reports. In 2002, NCD commissioned Janet Lord of the Landmine Survivors Network to write a detailed legal and policy analysis of the need for a new UN disability rights convention. I recommend that report as essential background to today's discussion about the need for a UN convention.

In 2003, Professor Arlene Kanter and I had the honor of serving as consultants to NCD as authors of a report, *Foreign Policy and Disability: Legislative Strategies and Civil Rights Protection to Ensure Inclusion of People with Disabilities*. In this report, released at a U.S. Senate briefing on September 9th, 2003, NCD cites numerous reports over the last 10 years identifying the failure of U.S. foreign assistance programs to respond to the needs of people with disabilities. Not only have construction projects been inaccessible to people with disabilities but many programs have not been accessible to people with physical or mental disabilities. More broadly, there has not been a concerted effort to document, challenge, or overcome the vast problem of human rights abuses to which people with disabilities are subject worldwide.

NCD has called for the reform of U.S. foreign policy and foreign assistance to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in U.S. foreign policy, foreign assistance, and all U.S. government and its activities abroad.

If we stand for the human rights of people with disabilities, we must stand for it in our own actions as the U.S. government. We must ensure that U.S. funded assistance programs don't discriminate. Indeed, we must ensure that foreign assistance programs respond to needs and are fully inclusive of people with disabilities.

We have recently made tremendous progress in Congress. I would particularly like to acknowledge the work of Senator Tom Harkin who championed historic new legislation in the last session of Congress. The new legislation requires any construction funded by USAID around the world to be accessible to people with disabilities. It requires all U.S. programs in Afghanistan and Iraq to be accessible to people with disabilities, in conformity with USAID's Policy Paper on Disability. The most innovative new provision of legislation makes enforcement of disability rights a precondition for countries to receive funding under the new Millennium Challenge Account. By creating financial incentives for governments to take action on disability rights, this law establishes a specialized tool of foreign policy that will help bring attention and pressure on governments to take action. In the spirit of the NCD report, it is my hope that MCA views this as more than a tool to use against governments. It should be viewed as a mandate to help governments, and non-governmental disability organizations around the world, to meet these human rights and disability rights goals. The NCD report calls on Congress to create a "Fund for Inclusion," setting aside funds to support for the development of non-governmental disability rights organizations.

Turning now to the question: why a convention? In ten years, MDRI has documented human rights abuses against people with mental disabilities in 21 countries on three continents. I have seen untold human suffering in every country I have visited. I've seen people locked away for their whole lives in psychiatric hospitals, as well as institutions for people with developmental or other disabilities. I have seen children and I've seen grown men and women left naked, covered in their own feces. MDRI recently documented a situation in Paraguay where two boys were placed in an institution by family members unable to care for them at home without any form of governmental support. When the boys were placed in the institution they probably had some form of intellectual disability, but they wore clothing, they talked, they interacted with people around them. For at least four years, these boys were held naked in isolation with no clothes,

no toilet, no place to sleep other than a mat the floor of a barren cell. They ate their food off the floor. According to doctors at the facility, they became psychotic as a result of the years of isolation and abuse. When we visited them, they could no longer speak. All they did was scream, howl, and grunt.

Their lives had been thrown away. The lives of 400 men and women in that same psychiatric facility have been thrown away. They live in isolation with little hope of returning to society. Many are denied basic medical care, much less the dignity of some privacy or their own clothing. In wealthier countries, people may be detained in clean institutions with new clothing. But their isolation from society and their pain at being denied human contact may be much the same. Does the international community speak out about these abuses? No. In almost every country of the world, you can find people relegated to the bleak, back wards of institutions—or abandoned on the streets. That same experience has been going on in many societies throughout the world. And the world has failed to speak out time and time again.

The U.S. administration has said that the proper way to deal with this is through domestic legislation, rather than international human rights legislation. I beg to differ on this point. As a matter of international law, there is a very important difference between matters of purely domestic concern and issues of international human rights. The international legal framework is built upon the notion of state sovereignty. Matters of social policy and of educational policy, are protected by state sovereignty. And a government may do what it will in that area. But the international community has come to realize there are certain principles of government practice that are not just matters of state sovereignty. When governments deny their citizens basic human dignity and autonomy, when they subject them to extremes of suffering, when they segregate them from society—we call these violations of fundamental human rights. And when a country sinks so low as to deny the fundamental rights of its citizen, the world will speak out. We will hold governments accountable for the most extreme abuses. That is why we need a convention. It's not enough to offer technical assistance on how to improve the law, we must hold governments accountable for their violations.

Based on my observations as a human rights investigator over the last ten years—and based on the near void of activity by established human rights oversight bodies—I believe that the abuses experienced by people with disabilities around the world are the greatest international human rights problem that goes unacknowledged in the world today.

There are at least 600 million people with disabilities in the world. How many thousands of people are segregated from society in closed psychiatric facilities? By the thousands, children and young adults with disabilities are placed in orphanages and other institutions. I have met families in Armenia, Turkey, Russia, and Mexico who were heartbroken about placing their child in an institution—or who were afraid that they might have to do so one day if they could no longer provide care. I have met adults with mental disabilities living a life of terror that they may be one day forced into an institution if they cannot keep it together to fend for themselves. I have met fathers, mothers, brothers, husbands, wives who wanted to keep a relative at home with them, but their governments do not provide services that will allow families to stay together in the community. Heart breaking as it is, parents are often forced to put their children in or-

phanages. These are not orphans. These are children orphaned by social and medical policy that say they're different and shouldn't have a chance to live as a part of society at large. Social policies that needlessly segregate people from society are a form of discrimination. Legal systems that do not protect against arbitrary detention permit ongoing violations of human rights.

These are just a few of the abuses that can be addressed by a disability rights convention. This is why we must commit ourselves to speaking out. We must make it a priority of our human rights agenda to end such intolerable abuses against people with disabilities everywhere.

This Congress has adopted legislation establishing that human rights will be the core of our foreign policy. We must ensure that this promise extends to people with disabilities. When governments strip whole groups of citizens of their rights because of a disability, when governments put people away, or when they allow them to die on the streets with no dignified form of assistance, those are human rights abuses. Challenging such abuses should become the core of our foreign policy.

In its last session, this Congress made invaluable steps in the right direction by revising our foreign assistance laws. Now let us explicitly recognize the concerns of people with disabilities as part of the pantheon of international human rights issues. I strongly encourage and appreciate the work of those members of Congress who have supported resolution 169. I call on all members to do the same.

I would like to leave you with one last thought. Over the years, I have personally encountered hundreds of children and adults, old men and old women who have spent most of their life behind bars. It is amazingly easy to write these people off as subhuman. As if they are already the walking dead. Yet I have also seen a glimpse of hope in their eyes. With the smallest amount of respect for their dignity, people come to life. The tiniest hint of a possibility that a man or woman might one day leave the institution can give that person a reason to go on living. What does it matter that people far across the waters care about them and their rights? It is a reason to go on living. Members of Congress, you have a chance to contribute to their reason for living. You have an ability to contribute to give them hope. In your careers, this may be one of the least costly and greatest opportunities to challenge abuses of hundreds of millions of people. Please take that action. Please support Resolution 169. And please support the U.N. Disability Rights Convention.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JAMES C.
MOORE

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS
OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 2, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart after learning that Colorado has lost one of its truly great citizens. James Moore of Pueblo, Colorado recently passed away at age eighty-six. He spent his life serving those he loved, and James loved about everybody. As his community and family mourn his passing, I believe it appropriate to recognize the life of this exceptional man before this body of Congress and this nation.

James showed up everyday at his job as an insurance agent for Equitable Life Assurance